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Our Little Secrets

WHY CHALABI?

Writing in the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth, Smadar Peri reports that Ahmed Chalabi, head of the exile group Iraqi National Congress, was pushed into America's arms by Israeli intelligence. Here's Peri's story.

Chalabi's Israeli link took place 13 years ago. KZ, a Defense Ministry official, recently revealed details of his first meeting with Chalabi in London. "Chalabi immediately projected Middle Eastern warmth. He is very intelligent and surprised me with his great knowledge about us. He knew each of the components of our political gallery, the ministers, the influential MKs, IDF Intelligence and Mossad heads. He also knew about Israel's open and covert relations in the Arab world.

"Our talk quickly got down to the future relations between Iraq and Jerusalem, after Saddam's fall. Even back then he insisted on drawing up a new political map of the Middle East and announced that Iraq would hoist the banner of democracy."

Maj. Gen. Danny Rothschild, who headed the IDF Intelligence research branch, received Chalabi's telephone numbers in London in 1990 and went to meet him in secret. Only very rarely was IDF Intelligence able to make links to a senior Iraqi exile who displayed such great quantities of good will. They discussed Israel's efforts to get information on the fate of IDF POWs and MIAs.

"Chalabi promised us that he could use his contacts in Teheran to check out the Ron Arad matter,"

(**OLS** *continued on page 2*)

The Jayson Blair Affair

Why Dumping on The New York Times Is A Waste of Time

BY ALEXANDER COCKBURN

People on the left spend a lot more time than they should complaining about the mainstream papers, most particularly the New York Times. They fume at the breakfast table, and often in print, or on the airwaves, bitterly decrying falsities in "The newspaper of record". What do they expect? In fact, they should rejoice when the Times gets things wrong, which it mostly does, and take it as a singular event when it blunders into accuracy.

These days the people who write and edit the New York Times have obtained their eminence on this pinnacle of mainstream corporate journalism through the sorting process deployed by the ruling elites throughout all the important institutions, albeit far more thoroughly than in the legal or religious sectors, where the occasional oddball survives. In papers such as the Times or the Post the batting average in elevating safe figures is one hundred per cent. The chances of an eccentric editor reaching the upper branches of the tree are zero, and near zero for reporters.

The winnowing process begins in the journalism schools, where retired hacks instruct their charges in the sedate arts of being mouthpieces for corporate America. The journalism students begin to build up their inventory of clips, laboring to extirpate any dangerous element of indignation, heterodoxy or even zest. They're beaten, cowed souls before they even apply to the Times for an internship.

The dreariest place on any campus is the J-school, and whenever any young person comes to me to write a testimonial for them to get into journalism school I rail bitterly at their decision, though I concede that these days a diploma from one of these feedlots for mediocrity is pretty much mandatory for anyone who wants to get in to mainstream journalism.

Now the Times is nursing its bruises from the Jayson Blair affair. There are so many smellier corpses in the New York Times's mausoleum, not to mention that larger graveyard of truth known as the American Fourth Estate, that it's hard to get too upset about what Blair did. This same Blair, as I'm sure CounterPunchers know, was a young black reporter on the New York Times, exposed and denounced at colossal length on May 11 by a team of reporters from his own paper. The guy is now in hiding, his career in ruins.

To be sure, Blair made up a bunch of not very important stuff, and he's embarrassed the hell out of his former colleagues and his publisher. The New York tabs have been having a field day. But from all the editorial hand wringing you'd think he'd undermined the very foundations of the Republic.

It reminds me of a New York Times editorial back in 1982, commenting on what began with my own expose of Christopher Jones, a young man who had written an article in the New York Times magazine about a visit to Cambodia during which he claimed to have seen Pol Pot through binoculars.

In this same piece Jones made the mistake of plagiarizing an entire paragraph from Andre Malraux's novel La Voie

(**Times** *continued on page 3)*

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Our Little Secrets

Rothschild recounted. "I remember that Chalabi's son came to meet me at the airport and picked me up in his black, fancy Mercedes. How did he maintain secrecy when he went around with such ostentatious signs? Gradually I realized that this was an important component in the image Chalabi was trying to project."

Rothschild remembers that he wrote a classified report. The information on the Israeli MIAs and POWs, which Chalabi promised through his contacts in Teheran, never materialized, in Rothschild's next two meetings with Chalabi. This did not prevent Israeli security officials from recommending Chalabi to the American administration and connecting him to senior advisers in the White House, the Pentagon and the CIA. As a result of the recommendations, James Woolsey, the former CIA director, gave him patronage.

Not everyone in the U.S. was impressed with Chalabi, and loud voices in the White House and State Department were heard over the years speaking out against building up Chalabi's status in the Pentagon. In Israel, too, with a certain delay, the Mossad and the IDF Intelligence marked him as a "dangerous fraud." Former Mossad director, Ephraim Halevy, makes a face when Chalabi's name is mentioned. "This man has no chance," Halevy says. "It's a waste of time." A senior Israeli security establishment official said, "Despite the pressure put on us, I absolutely refuse to meet with Chabali." When asked why, the official replied, "Because I don't get involved with gangsters. People like him shouldn't be our friends." And if Chalabi is eventually the next leader in Iraq? "I have been following him for years," said the official. "Even if his dream comes true and he manages to get himself a role in Baghdad, he'll be murdered in a month. He won't survive. We shouldn't rely on him."

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Get the Usual Suspects & Then Just Let Them Go

Don't be too impressed by the recent $1.4 billion settlement stemming from fraud charges leveled by New York's attorney general, Eliot Spitzer, against major banks, consequent upon the collapse of the great stock bubble.

The $1.4 billion from 10 firms includes $487.5m in fines and $387.5m in disgorged profits, with the rest going to fund independent research and investor education.

Henry Blodget, the former Merrill Lynch internet tipster, will pay $4m to settle fraud charges and has been banned from the industry. Blodget's private emails described his own share tips as "junk" and "dog".

Salomon Smith Barney's Jack Grubman earlier agreed to pay $15m and accept a lifetime ban. Spitzer reserved his most vehement abuse for Credit Suisse, First Boston, Merrill Lynch and Citigroup, and flayed CEOs who "shifted risk to unknowing investors while guaranteeing their own rewards".

Citigroup has said it's really, really sorry, though probably the paramount emotion of its chief, Sandy Weill, is relief that Spitzer and the SEC shirked the proper course, which would have been to accuse him of fraud, the mastermind behind such figures as Grubman.

This is exactly the problem. It's the "analysts" that are taking the fall, rather than CEOs like Sandy Weill who ordered them to do what they did.

The fines are tiny: the 10 top banks made ten times the fine ($13 billion in fees) in the telecommunications industry alone. Citicorp was almost able to cover its fine with fees from Worldcom, Global Crossing and Qwest alone.

All the new "firewalls" installed by the regulators are pointless if the cost on discovery is minimal, as these fines show. By the same token the idea of a ban on "spinning" (handing over hot ipos (initial public offerings) to executives is ludicrous, since there are no hot ipos these day.

The main forms of corruption are legal:

—pay in stock options, which don't have to be reported to shareholders as a cost,

—insider trading, especially through exploiting the difference between pro-forma earnings reported to the public and GAAP earnings reported much later to SEC,

—megabanks (consequence of the abolition by Congress in Clinton-time of the Glass Steagall Act) that combine commercial and investment banking, giving clients cheap rates and infinite funds via the former to get their business for the latter,

—combined auditing and consulting, as in Enron and Worldcom, where the country's biggest auditing company was also acting as consultant.

Robert Brenner is author of the excellent "Boom and Bubble" (Verso).

Ain't Stephen Thomas A Beaut?

We recently published a piece by Rachel Corrie's mother, Cindy, on our CounterPunch website. Now this, addressed to Mrs Corrie, "Hello: The fact that you publish in an old-line Stalinist rag says just about everything that needs to be said about you. Shame on you. The best thing for you to do is keep quiet. Your failure to adequately teach and provide moral counseling for your daughter is quite obvious. Go home and be quiet, woman. You are a fool. The death of your daughter didn't teach you a thing. Then again, I doubt that an old Stalinist fool like you can be taught. You are responsible for the death of your daughter. Stephen Thomas." CP

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(**Times** *continued from page 1)*

Royale, and I pointed this out in a column in the Village Voice, adding the obvious point that Jones's binoculars must have been extremely powerful to have allowed Jones to recognize Pol Pot, let alone describe his eyes as "dead and stony".

My item stirred the Washington Post to point an accusing finger. Then the Times itself unleashed a huge investigation of the wretched Jones and ran a pompous editorial proclaiming that "It may not be too much to say that, ultimately, it debases democracy."

I remember thinking at the time that as a democracy-debaser Jones looked like pretty small potatoes, and it's the same way with Jayson Blair now. He made up quotes, invented scenes, and plagiarized the work of other reporters, and if senior Times editors had not been as optimistically forgiving as, say, the Catholic hierarchy in dealing with a peccant priest, Blair would, and should, have been promptly fired after his second major screw-up. (Incidentally, Jeffrey St Clair's friend Larry Tuttle, a noted green campaigner based in Portland, Oregon, tells us that a few years ago he was on a tour of Montana with a group of young aspiring journalists, imparting to them lore about western environmental issues. Even then Blair stood out as a manic hustler, a five-minute expert, discoursing ignorantly on issues about which he had zero grasp.)

But in the larger scale of things Blair's improprieties are of no great consequence. The people into whose mouths he put imaginary words, and from whose imagined front porch he pretended to see tobacco fields instead of tract homes are not notably put out. Ordinary Americans reckon that since you shouldn't believe a word of anything you read in a newspaper or hear over the airwaves, what's so different about Jayson Blair.

The biggest story Blair was involved in was the Washington sniper story. Deployed by his editors into the media feeding frenzy following Muhammad and Malvo's arrests, he invented quotes which he attributed to unnamed prosecutors and FBI officials, and which they then angrily denounced. Again, these fabrications didn't have much effect on anything.

But day after day, in the New York Times and other major newspapers, one comes across blind quotes, dropped by "White House sources" or "senior administration officials", relayed by reporters and columnists mostly without any warning label alerting the public that such-and-such a quote was a volley in some savage bureaucratic feud and should be regarded with extreme suspicion.

The Jayson Blair scandal comes on the heels of what was one of the most intensive bouts of botched reporting, wild speculation and straightforward disingenuous lying in the history of American journalism, a bout which prompted an invasion, many deaths and now - given the way things are currently headed - the likelihood of mass starvation. In other words, the lousy reporting really had consequences.

The invasion of Iraq was premised on the existence of weapons of mass destruction. None has yet been found and most of the US detective teams are now wanly returning home. Did the New York Times assist in this process of deception? Very much so. Just look through the clips file of one of its better known reporters, Judith Miller.

It was Miller who first launched the supposedly knowledgeable Iraqi nuclear scientist Khidir Hamza on the world, crucial to the US government's effort to portray a nuclear-capable Saddam. Miller it was who most recently wrote a story about a supposed discovery of a chemical WMD site, based entirely on the say-so of a US military unit about an Iraqi scientist whom Miller was not permitted to identify, let alone meet and interview.

Ordinary Americans reckon that since you shouldn't believe a word of anything you read in a newspaper or hear over the airwaves, what's so different about Blair?

Thus far there's been no agonized reprise from the Times on its faulty estimate of the credibility of Hamza. And though Blair's fabrications about the home-coming of Jessica Lynch were minutely dissected neither the Times nor any other US paper that I've read has had anything to say about the charges made in the London Times that the "heroic" rescue of Lynch was from an undefended hospital in circumstances very different and less creditable than those heralded by a Pentagon desperate for good publicity during a time when the invasion seemed to have faltered amid unexpectedly stiff resistance.

In fact, for the Times the Blair scandal might well turn out to be a pr boost for the newspaper, proof that it is manly enough to 'fess up properly and take its punishment, that Blair was but one lone bad apple in a sound barrel, an apple furthermore that only got into the barrel because of a laudable indulgence towards an African-American, forgiven his sins because he was black.

As Glen Ford, who writes an acridly brilliant web commentary, the Black Commentator, remarks apropos a theme of much white punditry on Blair, that somehow it's all the fault of affirmative action, "Black people bear no onus for white incompetence in selecting Black people to carry out white corporate missions."

Then Ford contrasts the humdrum fabrications of Blair with a run-of-the-mill piece of reporting that appeared on May 5, in a report by Times-man Adam Nagourney. Nagourney discussed the televised Democratic primary debate in South Carolina. There was only one problem, and it apparently didn't bother Nagourney's editors. He mentioned only six of the nine candidates: Lieberman, Kerry, Edwards, Gephardt, Dean and Graham. In over 1,000 words, Nagourney failed to note the existence of Al Sharpton, Carole Moseley-Braun or Dennis Kucinich. The two Blacks and the leftist got purged from the newspaper of record.

That's why I can't get too troubled about Jayson Blair. The Times has it coming, for a thousand more serious reasons that haven't ever bothered its editors or its publisher.

Remember Wen Ho Lee? As we said here at the time, the collapse of the government's case against Wen Ho Lee represented one of the greatest humiliations of a national newspaper in the history of journalism.

The New York Times sparked the persecution of Wen Ho Lee, his solitary confinement under threat of execution, his denial of bail, his shackling, the loss of his job, the anguish and terror endured by this scientist and his family. The two Times reporters who launched the persecution of Wen Ho Lee on March 6, 1999, were

(**Times** *continued on page 6)*

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Meet Steven Griles

Champion Sleazeball of the Bush Team

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

Steven Griles is finally on the run. Griles is Interior Gale Norton's top lieutenant, the man who holds the keys to the nation's oil and mineral reserves. For the past two years, he's used those keys to unlock nearly every legal barrier to exploitation, opening the public lands to a carnival of corporate plunder. He became the toast of Texas. But now Griles is hiding out from reporters and congressional investigators after accounts of his ongoing sleazy relationships with his former associates in big oil have begun to ooze out into the open.

Griles's recent misfortunes are scarcely a surprise. From the time he took his oath of office, Griles was a congressional investigation waiting to happen. The former coal industry flack was one of Bush's most outrageous appointments, an arrogant booster of the very energy cartel he was meant to regulate. His track record could not be given even the slightest green gloss. A veteran of the Reagan administration, Griles schemed closely with disgraced Interior Secretary James Watt to open the public lands of the West to unfettered access by oil and mining companies, many of whom funded the Mountain States Legal Center, Watt's strange outpost of divinely-inspired environmental exploitation, .

As Deputy Director of Surface Mining, Griles gutted strip-mining regulations and was a relentless booster of the oil-shale scheme, one of the most outlandish giveaways and environmental blunders of the last century. He also pushed to overturn the popular moratorium on off shore oil drilling on the Pacific Coast, a move of such extreme zealotry in the service of big oil that it even caught Reagan off guard.

After leaving public office, Griles quickly cashed in on his iniquitous tenure in government by launching a DC lobbying firm called J. Stephen Griles and Associations. He soon drummed up a list of clients including Arch Coal, the American Gas Association, National Mining Association, Occidental Petroleum, Pittston Coal and more than 40 other gas, mining and energy concerns, big and small, foreign and domestic.

Then Griles was tapped as Norton's chief deputy. After contentious senate hearings that exposed his various and lucrative entanglements with the oil and gas industry, Griles was finally confirmed to office on July 7, 2001. He later signed two separate statements agreeing to recuse himself from direct involvement in any Interior Deparment matters that might involve his former clients. He has since flouted both of those agreements, as disclosed by his own calendar of meetings, liberated through a Freedom of Information Act filing made by Friends of the Earth.

Now Griles is in hiding and won't answer calls.

As the calendar and meeting notes reveal, Griles has used the cover of the 9/11 attacks and the war on Iraq to advance his wholesale looting of the public domain for the benefit of some of his former clients and business cronies. He has pushed rollbacks in environmental standards for air and water; advocated increased oil and gas drilling on public lands; tried to exempt the oil industry from royalty payments; and sought to create new loopholes in regulations governing stripmining.

Griles wasted no time compiling a wish list from his pals. Within days of assuming office, Griles convened a series of parleys between his former clients and Interior Department officials to chart a gameplan for accelerating mining, oil leasing and coal-methane extraction from public lands. Between August of 2001 and January of this year, Griles met at least 7 times with former clients; 15 times with companies represented by his former client the National Mining Association; on at least 16 occasions he arranged meetings between himself, former clients, and other administration officials to discuss rollback of air pollution standards for power plants, oil refineries and industrial boilers; on 12 occasions he arranged similar meetings between regulators and former clients regarding coal mining.

In the early days of his tenure, Griles huddled on at least three occasions with Harold Quinn, Jr., a chief lobbyist with the National Mining Association. Quinn and his association are Griles' former clients.

Quinn had business that needed urgent attention. He prodded Griles to move quickly to loosen restrictions on the most environmentally malign form of coal mining, the aptly-named mountaintop removal method, where entire streams and valleys are buried in mining waste. Although both the Clinton and Bush administrations saw nothing wrong with the practice, a federal judge thought it was going too far and ordered an injunction on this kind of mining. Griles agreed to do what he could to overturn the ban, a move that would accrue to the benefit of one of his former clients, Arch Coal.

Griles also convened a meeting on September 10, 2001 with a dozen top executives from the Edison Electric Institute, another former client of his lobbyshop. The energy bosses came to congratulate Griles on Bush's plans to scale-back enforcement actions on filthy and aging coal-fired power plants. But they also came to gripe. They were unhappy with Bush's pledge to toughen-up emission standards on sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury. Griles, who was then the Bush administration's point man on the financial impacts of air quality rules on the energy industry, bent a sympathetic ear.

From July 27, 2001 to February 20 of last year, Griles's logs show that he met on at least 32 occasions with other administration officials to discuss pending regulatory matters that were a concern to his former clients.

These meetings flout federal ethics rules which prohibit executive branch

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Griles used a befuddled 94-year old woman as "a human shield" to deflect unpleasing questions about his incestuous ties to his friends in big oil.

officials from participating in any "particular matter" which could advance their own financial interests or that involves former employers or clients. Griles claims that the meetings were merely social visits, utterly lacking in political intent. "We don't talk about work," Griles assured the Washington Post last year in an interview. "We're not allowed. We are all as scrupulous as we can be to assure that I will not be involved in any particular matter that would violate the ethics agreement or even have the appearance of a conflict of interest. The president said he wanted this administration to be held to the highest ethical standards. And I don't ever want it said that I didn't."

But it now turns out that not only was Griles shilling for his former clients, he was also pushing policies that could plump up his own pocketbook. Griles was an ownership partner in a DC lobbying firm called National Environmental Strategies, a polluter's lobby founded in 1990 by Marc Himmelstein and Haley Barbour. Barbour soon left the firm to become head of the Republican National Committee. Griles moved in.

When he was nominated as deputy secretary of Interior, Griles was forced to sell his interest in the firm for $1.1 million , and he fixed up a deal with Himmelstein, a friend and Republican powerbroker. Instead of paying Griles off in a lump sum, Himmelstein will pay the Bush official $284,000 each year over the next four years. Griles claims he arranged this kind of payment plan so as not to leave NES "strapped for cash."

But in effect Griles remains financially tied to the health of Himmelstein's firm. And, in fact, Himmelstein has admitted that over the past two years he and Griles have gotten together several times over beers and dinner.

One of the issues high on the list of priorities for some of NES's clients was coal-methane gas drilling. In April of 2002, Griles directly intervened in a bitter dispute over the huge deposits of coal methane in Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming--deposits worth billions of dollars and long craved by the natural gas industry. This looms as the largest energy development project in the country and has been assailed by environmentalists and native groups as an environmental nightmare.

The project, which calls for the development of more than 80,000 coal-methane wells, is so fraught with danger that even the Bush administration's own EPA issued a report sharply criticizing the environmental consequences of the scheme. Among the findings:

The 80,000 coal methane wells will discharge nearly 20,000 gallons of salty water each day onto the ground surface, fouling the land, creeks and aquatic life; over its lifepsan, the project will deplete the underground aquifer of more than 4 trillion gallons of water, that will take hundreds of years to replenish; full-scale production will also entail 17,000 miles of new roads, 20,000 miles of pipelines and will turn nearly 200,000 acres of rangeland into an industrial zone.

This rare rebuke from the normally supine EPA roused Griles into furious action. On April 12, 2002, Griles sent a scorching memo under his Department of Interior letterhead chastising the EPA for dragging its feet on the project. He chided the agency of being uncooperative with industry. It turns out that Griles had formerly represented the very companies that he was now accusing the EPA of failing to give proper deference. As a lobbyist, Griles's clients included the Coal Bed Methane Ad Hoc Committee, Devon Energy, Restone and Western Gas Resources, all companies seeking to gain access to the Powder Basin gas fields. His old firm, NES, also hosted an industry-sponsored tour of Powder Basin for EPA and Interior Department officials. NES also represents Griles' former client Devon Energy, which stands to make a killing if the deal is approved.

Griles's meddling in this matter came to the attention of the Department's lawyers. On May 8, they forced Griles to sign an agreement disqualifying himself from any further involvement in the coal-methane issue. He later said he did so "for all the world to know that I'm not even going to be talking to anybody about it again."

Now the Inspector General of the Department of Interior has launched an investigation into Griles's entanglements with his clients and Griles isn't talking to anybody, especially the press.

But on May 9, reporter Roberta Baskin tracked Griles down at a discreet ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the Meadowood Farm Trail in Lorton, Virginia. Baskin approached Griles with a cameraman and began asking him unsettling questions about Powder Basin. As Baskin zoomed in for the kill, Griles grabbed hold of the nearest object he could find: a 94-year old woman named Gladys Bushrod, a ceremonial guest. Basking Griles used the befuddled Bushrod as "a human shield" to deflect unpleasing questions about his incestuous ties to his friends in big oil until he reached his waiting limo, whereupon he relinquished the woman and made his getaway like Beelzebub amid a puff of dust and hydrocarbons. CP

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(Times *continued from page 3*)

James Risen and Jeff Gerth.

By the spring of 1999 their effort to evict Bill Clinton from office for the Lewinsky affair had collapsed. They needed a new stick with which to beat the administration and the New York Times handed it to them. Two days later Wen Ho Lee, an American of Taiwanese descent, was fired from his job. Ahead of him lay months of further pillorying in a racist witch-hunt led by the Times, whose news columns were replete with further mendacious bulletins from Risen and Gerth, and whose op ed page featured Safire using their stories to launch his own calumnies against Wen Ho Lee and the Clinton administration.

Guided by Safire, the Republicans in Congress pounced upon the Wen Ho Lee case with ardor approaching ecstasy.

In Safire's insinuations, the Clinton White House was but an annex of the Middle Kingdom, and the transfer of US nuclear secrets merely one episode in a long, dark narrative of treachery to the American flag.

The most preposterous expression of the Republican spy crusade against the Clinton administration came with the release of the 900-page report named after California rep Christopher Cox, filled with one demented assertion after another, including the memorable though absolutely false claim that "the stolen information includes classified information on seven US thermonuclear warheads, including every currently deployed thermonuclear warhead in the US ballistic missile arsenal."

Yet Risen and Gerth's stories had been profuse with terrible errors from the outset. Their prime source had been Notra Trulock, an embittered security official in the Department of Energy intent upon his own vendettas within the DoE. Risen and Gerth eagerly swallowed his preposterous assertions. From him and other self-interested officials they relayed one falsehood after another: that Wen Ho Lee had failed a lie detector test; that the Los Alamos lab was the undoubted source of the security breach; that it was from Los Alamos that the Chinese had acquired the blueprint of the miniaturized W-88 nuclear warhead.

Had the New York Times launched its campaign of terror against Wen Ho Lee at the height of the cold war, it is quite likely that Wen Ho Lee would have been swept to his doom, most likely with a sentence of life imprisonment.

And what happened to the prime journalistic actors in this shameful saga? There was no public rebuke for Risen and Gerth. Safire, veteran perpetrator of a thousand scurrilous and baseless insinuations, was wheeled on to heap more abuse on Jayson Blair.

Though there are a few good reporters on its staff, we ceased to have much respect for the New York Times many years ago, and have regarded the honors heaped on it by such servile bodies as the Pulitzer Board as ludicrous. Consider those staffers who have gone to the wall for reporting too well. Jo Thomas anticipated by many years the recent disclosures of the British Army's "shoot to kill" policies in Northern Ireland. But the British government's furious protests to New York Times editors had their effect and Thomas was silenced.

In his columns on the op ed page Sidney Schanberg had the audacity to utter some bracing truths about the politics of real estate in New York. But of course the New York Times is a major player in the real estate power plays of mid-town Manhattan and Schanberg went to the wall.

Other disgraces? The Times was as assiduous as the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times in throwing mud at Garry Webb for his San Jose Mercury News series on the CIA's complicity in drug smuggling from Central America. And even though subsequent CIA admissions have vindicated Webb the Times , in company with the other traducers of Webb, has never seen fit to set the record straight.

The easiest and certainly the briskest way to read the Times these days is through the headlines it sends one for free over the internet. One can mentally supply the stories, without going through the exertion of trying to remember the necessary passwords to bring them up on the screen. On the supply side, Blair cut the same corners. Just like Janet Cook at the Washington Post, he knew what The Man wanted, and served it up at an efficient rate. It's ironic that he finally got toasted for excessive plagiarism, since the core mode of the conventional press is collective plagiarism, endlessly recycling the same banalities, with tiny modulations to ensure "originality". CP

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Why Not Give Blair a Pulitzer? They Gave Them to Safire and Gerth

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